

Catalyst



The Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority



Welcome to Catalyst, the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority's quarterly newsletter. Guided by its Board members, the RDA is working to transform the econ-

omy and quality of life in the region. RDA projects are in motion throughout Lake and Porter Counties. Lakeshore improvements are attracting tourists and spending. Marquette Park Lakefront East is nearing completion, and Gary Chicago International Airport is on track to complete its runway extension. For more information, visit us at rda.in.gov or www.rdatransformation.org.

Sincerely,
Bill Hanna
President and CEO

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Airport Progress Continues, Clearing Work for New Runway Begins

Gary, IN – Work continues on the runway extension project at and around the Gary Chicago International Airport.

Dynamic compaction of soil along the route of the new rail line was completed on schedule, excavation work for the new box culvert is done and more than 500 feet of the culvert itself has been finished. The airport also completed a new entrance for Swift Transportation after determining that changes to the path of the new railroad line conflicted with the trucking company's existing entrance.



"We have to raise the road six to eight feet right where the current entrance to their terminal is, so you would have trucks entering and exiting on a hill, which doesn't work," explains Interim Airport Director Steve Landry. The airport purchased the vacant Illiana Trucking property on the opposite side of the Swift terminal, demolished the vacant Illiana Trucking building and built the new Swift entrance there.

"Swift has been a model of cooperation," Landry says, "especially considering that we didn't meet with them until the very end of 2010 because we didn't think the project would have any impact on their property. When we did go to them, their response was, what can we do to help?"

With the culvert nearing completion, sewer and drainage work to divert storm water runoff into the culvert is underway. NIPSCO is also working in the area relocating power lines and an electrical pedestal, and agreements have been reached with the Majestic Star casino and Indiana American Water to relocate water and sewer lines in six locations that conflict with the realignment of the CN tracks. The airport has awarded a contract for grading work along the length of the realignment, except for the portion where culvert work is ongoing.

Clearing and grubbing work for the runway extension itself has begun. This project required a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers since the area is classified as a wetland.

Economic Development Awards Recognize NWI Project

"It's gratifying to see the region and the state being recognized for all its hard work and innovation in attracting new business."

- Bill Hanna



Crown Point, IN – Two Northwest Indiana projects were among 10 cited statewide by *Area Development* magazine in presenting a 2012 Silver Shovel Award for excellence in economic development to Indiana in its summer issue.

The magazine named Canadian National's planned expansion of the Kirk Yard in Gary and Fronius USA's deci-

sion to locate its U.S. headquarters in Portage as two of the 10 "big projects" advancing the state's diverse economy. Combined, the two projects represent approximately \$160 million in investment in the region and are projected to create more than 600 jobs.

The RDA played a key role in bringing Canadian National to Gary by providing a

matching grant towards improvements such as installation of a new waste water treatment facility.

The RDA also worked with local and state economic development officials last year to provide \$2 million in assistance to Modern Forge for its new facility in Merrillville. The company, which is moving to Indiana from Blue Island, IL, is investing \$17 million in a state-of-the-art forging facility expected to create 240 jobs.

"It's gratifying to see the region and the state being recognized for all its hard work and innovation in attracting new business. Here in Northwest Indiana, RDA-funded initiatives have made huge strides toward revitalizing our shoreline and creating signature communities with strong appeal to companies like Fronius and Modern Forge as great places to live, work and play," said Bill Hanna, president and CEO of the RDA.

NWI Leaders Open New Bridge Between Communities

Hammond & Whiting, IN – Regional Development Authority officials including Hammond



Board of Directors appointee Peter Novak and President and CEO Bill Hanna joined the Mayors of Hammond and Whiting, and other local leaders to mark the opening of the George Lake Pedestrian Bridge.

Passing over busy Indianapolis Boulevard, the new \$4 million bridge joins the lakefront trails of Hammond and Whiting. It forms a critical link in the Marquette Plan's vision for a trail system running the length of the shoreline in Northwest Indiana, and connecting to the waterfront trails in Chicago.

The bridge was designed by SEH of Indiana and built by

Hasse Construction, both of which have offices in Munster.

"This RDA has funded a number of projects in Hammond and Whiting over the last several years, such as the Wolf Lake Pavilion in Hammond and improvements to Whiting's Lakefront Park," Novak said. "This bridge provides an excellent way for residents of both communities to enjoy these great new additions to the shoreline."

An RDA grant covered the entire cost of the bridge. Since 2007, the RDA has invested more than \$53 million in lakefront projects in Whiting and Hammond.

Gary, RDA Celebrate the Rejuvenation of the Marquette Pavilion



Gary, IN – The RDA joined officials from the City of Gary, the South Shore Convention & Visitors Bureau, and local business and community leaders in April for the grand opening of the remodeled Marquette Park Pavilion.

“This would not have occurred without the help of the Regional Development Authority,” said Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson.

The Mayor called Marquette Park “one of the jewels of the City of Gary” and noted that the new Pavilion “provides another opportunity for us to show our city off.”

“The RDA values the partnership that we have with the City of Gary,” said RDA Chairman Leigh Morris. “This partnership continues to find ways to be a catalyst for transformational change in Northwest Indiana.”

The renewed Pavilion “is a signature project and one of the most beautiful venues in Northwest Indiana,” said J. Forest Hayes, Director of the Gary Department of Com-

merce. Hayes praised the teamwork of the city, the RDA, the design and construction firms involved in restoring the Pavilion, “and hundreds of hard-working individuals” for the success of the project. “This was delivered on-time, on-budget and with no major hiccups,” he said. “That is the future of the City of Gary. This is the beginning, not the end, of high-quality projects for our community.”

Rev. Dwight Gardner, President of the Gary Park Board, noted that the restoration of the Pavilion created jobs for Gary residents, fulfilling a promise made by Mayor Freeman-Wilson to work hard to ensure that public works projects in the city employ people from Gary. “We are about to embark on a wonderful new time in this community,” he said.

Parking Lots Next

The celebration came just weeks after the Mayor, Gary officials, and regional and construction partners broke ground on \$1.5 million in improvements to the park’s parking facilities.

“We are extremely pleased to be progressing on this project,” the Mayor said. Along with ongoing work at the adjacent Aquatorium, the latest project provides jobs for residents of Gary and, once all work is complete in 2013, will allow the city to market the Miller Beach neighborhood “as Northwest Indiana’s answer to the Hamptons.”

The new parking lots at the park include both environmental and safety upgrades.

“We will have one consolidated lot that will serve the aquatorium and act as overflow parking for the pavilion,” said Joel Baldin of Hitchcock Design. “The new lot will have sustainable features such as rain gardens and bioswales to manage storm water runoff. It will also have lighting, and those will be LED lights, another sustainable feature.” New water and sewer connections are also part of the project.

The RDA is providing \$28 million for the Marquette Project. The Environmental Protection Agency is providing an additional \$1 million.



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**To be a catalyst to transform
the economy and quality of life
in Northwest Indiana.**

The Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority was established by the State of Indiana in 2006 in order to provide leadership, direction and funding for five specific region-wide and long-term issues in Northwest Indiana:

- mass transit (rail and bus)
- the Gary Chicago International Airport
- the Lake Michigan Shoreline
- regional economic development

The RDA has a full-time paid staff of five and a seven -member board comprised of unpaid volunteer community leaders.

Porter County Welcomes Summer Tourists

The 2005 Porter County Destination Audit indicated that annually more than 3 million visitors come to Porter County to visit the Indiana Dunes. Those visitors find themselves trying to navigate through a place that lacks a gateway community or a place to start their experience.

During public hearings held in conjunction with the development of the Marquette Plan,

concerns were expressed that this lack of a gateway negatively impacted both the quality of life of Porter County residents and economic development opportunities associated with visitors.

As a result, planners created the Indiana 49 Lakeshore Gateway Corridor Development Project, which balances the needs of residents and visitors, and showcases the town's heritage while preserving the environment, protecting local waters and meeting the principles outlined in the Marquette Plan on the way toward "Creating a Livable Lakefront."

As part of the RDA-funded \$19.4 million Gateway to the Dunes project, which will upgrade Indiana 49 from I-94 north to the Indiana Dunes and create a cohesive foundation for economic development, the Town of Porter piggybacked on existing Indiana Department of Transportation plans

to rebuild the Indiana 49 bridges over US 12 and 20. The new bridges feature design elements which will be carried throughout the corridor as well as a 10-foot bike and walking path separated by a barrier wall, allowing safe pedestrian access from the town to the park.

With funding from the RDA, the town of Porter and Porter County are also building the Dunes Kankakee Trail. Part of the overall vision of a single continuous trail running from Chicago across Northwest Indiana, the Dunes Kankakee Trail will run from the Kankakee River east to the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore.

The Trail will connect the beach, the state park entrance and the Dorothy Buell Memorial Visitors' Center. Improvements include paving, trail restoration and flood control efforts.

